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No. 0627/68
9 January 1968

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Preliminary Assessment of Black Shield
Photography

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Summary

25X1 [redacted] Black Shield missions over North Vietnam on [redacted] provided cloud-free photographic coverage of about 75 percent of the country, including Hanoi, Haiphong, and the panhandle area. The two sites near Thanh Hoa which earlier photography indicated might contain coastal defense missile units were covered on [redacted]. One was unoccupied, and the second contained a few small unidentified objects. No further evidence of surface-to-surface missile deployment was noted. Five of North Vietnam's major airfields, most of the usable SA-2 sites, and most of the priority transportation targets for bomb damage assessment were photographed.

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Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Directorate of Intelligence.

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1. Black Shield missions over North Vietnam on [] provided cloud-free photographic coverage of about 75 percent of the country, including the Hanoi and Haiphong areas and the panhandle.

[] made one pass across the northern part of the country and [] made one pass up the panhandle and a second along the China border area.

2. Missile sites near Thanh Hoa: The two sites near Thanh Hoa which earlier photography indicated might contain coastal defense missile units were photographed []

[] The northern site (Site 2), which reportedly contained two possible launchers and unidentified equipment on [], was unoccupied on []

[] The other site (Site 1)--where a probable SS-N-2 cruise missile* and other equipment were reported in [] photography--was essentially unoccupied, although a few small, unidentified objects were visible. Both sites were struck repeatedly on 5 and 6 January. No other evidence of surface-to-surface missile deployment was noted.

3. Surface-to-air missile sites: [] covered 124 of North Vietnam's 217 usable SA-2 sites, including two new sites. Twelve sites were occupied. The readout of surface-to-air missile sites photographed by [] is not yet complete, but no major changes in order-of-battle are evident so far.

4. Air order-of-battle and airfields: Five major North Vietnamese airfields were covered on [] and there were no significant changes in the air order-of-battle. As many as 13 MIG-15s or 17s were observed and possibly two MIG-21s. All the airfields appeared serviceable except Kep. Three airfields

*The Soviet SS-N-2 cruise missile has a range of about 20 miles against large surface ships and carries a 1,000 to 2,000-pound high explosive warhead. It is normally carried by the Osa- and Komar-class guided missile patrol boats, but is also adaptable for fixed emplacement. No Osas or Komars have been identified in North Vietnam.

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were covered on [] and no major differences in order-of-battle were noted.

5. Aid to North Vietnam: A large truck convoy--about 140 vehicles--was observed crossing into North Vietnam from China along the road from Ping-hsiang to Dong Dang. About 30 of the trucks were towing pieces of equipment, at least some of which is probably field artillery. This much equipment could partially equip an artillery regiment. The artillery pieces could be held in reserve or deployed to the DMZ area to augment the guns now there or replace damaged weapons.

6. At Ping-hsiang itself approximately 345 pieces of rolling stock were sighted. This is about the same number seen during December, but a decline from the high recorded in September. The number of trucks stockpiled at Ping-hsiang totalled about 240. On 30 October, photography revealed nearly 500 trucks.

7. Land transportation system: The Black Shield missions covered Hanoi, Haiphong and almost all of the rail network.

8. At Haiphong, the railroad and highway bridge remains destroyed but a rail ferry or pontoon bridge adjacent to the bridge was serviceable on []. This area was attacked later on []. The three highway bridges leading from the port area remain interdicted, but the Haiphong Highway Bridge and possibly the Kien An Highway Bridge have been rebuilt as highway cable bridges. There has been no change in the number of rail and highway by-passes in the port since mid-December. The level of activity in Haiphong port is high and the amount of freight backlog is about the same as that observed in mid-December.

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9. At Hanoi, the two railroad and highway bridges were covered. The Canal des Rapides Bridge, interdicted on 16 December, was serviceable for both rail and highway traffic. The relative rapidity of this repair effort is not unusual at this key bridge. Repairs were probably easier because the destroyed span was immediately adjacent to the shore. The Red River Bridge remains interdicted and no repair efforts were observed. The mission did reveal, however, that two new highway by-passes over the Red River were available south of the Doumer Bridge, increasing the total number of rail and highway by-passes to 16.

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10. On the Hanoi-Haiphong line the railroad and highway bridges at Hai Duong and Ngoc Kuyet were covered. At Hai Duong, the rail bridge over the Song Thai Binh was unserviceable as was a rail by-pass bridge, but a rail ferry or pontoon bridge was serviceable. In addition, a new rail ferry was observed under construction, increasing the number of rail and highway by-passes at this bridge to seven. The Hai Duong Railroad/Highway Bridge East was serviceable as were its two rail by-passes and three highway by-passes. The two rail by-passes were unserviceable in mid-December. Further west, at Ngoc Kuyet, the main bridge is serviceable but the rail by-pass is unserviceable.

11. The mission revealed that the important Hanoi - Dong Dang line was serviceable for through traffic. This route was attacked after the mission, with strikes against the rail bridge at Lang Son and the rail yards at Bac Giang, Lang Dang, and Trung Quang. On the Hanoi - Lao Cai line, the photography revealed that rail service was possible over the entire line, with the destroyed rail bridge at Viet Tri continuing to limit through service. On the Hanoi-Vinh route, the mission showed through traffic limited by interdicted bridges at Tam Da and Sai Thou.

12. Power plants and industrial facilities: The most significant development noted in the industrial sector of the economy in recent photography is the reconstruction at damaged power facilities. The Bac Giang power plant now may be in partial operation. A new transformer has been identified near the plant and is apparently tied in with a line leading to Hanoi. Previously, only four power plants within the main power network--Hanoi, Viet Tri, Hon Gay, and Nam Dinh--were believed to be even partially operating. At the Viet Tri power plant

[redacted] supports our previous assessment that the plant is in partial operation. At Uong Bi and Thai Nguyen, work on the power plants is continuing, though neither is believed to be operating at this time. No change has been detected at industrial facilities at Thai Nguyen, Viet Tri, or at the major chemical plants since mid-December.